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STATE FOR H (PLEASE PASS TO HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
APPROPRIATIONS)
STATE ALSO FOR OES AND EUR/WE (TSMITH)

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: SENV ENRG ETRD EINV BEXP NL
SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS: CODEL PASTOR FOCUSES ON ENERGY
EFFICIENCY AND WATER MANAGEMENT

REF: THE HAGUE 1492

¶1. SUMMARY. The August 23-26 visit of a delegation led by Arizona Representative Ed Pastor highlighted Dutch efforts to tackle issues related to increasing energy efficiency, utilizing alternative energy resources, and identifying new water management/climate adaptation strategies. Visits to the Energy Research Center of the Netherlands, a wind turbine factory, and a wind farm showcased Dutch research and expertise in developing wind power as an renewable energy resource. The delegation also heard about Dutch plans to develop an energy grid in the North Sea. Meetings with Dutch Transport and Water Management officials focused on a need to shift away from "hard" defenses such as dikes to more natural defenses in the country's water management strategy. Tours of a storm surge barrier and "Room for Rivers" climate adaptation project gave the delegation a first-hand view of Dutch efforts in this area. This message has been cleared by Dixon Butler, Majority Sub-Committee Staff Director, Appropriations Committee. END SUMMARY.

¶2. A delegation led by Representative Ed Pastor (D-AZ) visited the Netherlands August 23-26 to discuss Dutch efforts to develop alternative energy efficiency technologies and Dutch approaches to water management/flood protection and climate adaptation. Other delegation members included Representative David Hobson (R-OH), Representative James Clyburn (D-SC), Representative Marion Berry (D-AR), Representative Kay Granger (R-TX), Representative Steve Israel (D-NY), Representative Phil Gingrey (R-GA), Representative Tim Ryan (D-OH), Dixon Butler, Majority Sub-Committee Staff Director, Appropriations Committee, Kevin Cook, Minority Sub-Committee Staff Director, Appropriations Committee, and Taunja Berquam, Professional Staff Member, Appropriations Committee. The following provides highlights of the visit.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY: FOCUS ON WIND POWER

¶3. During a visit to the Knowledge Center for Wind Turbine Materials and Construction (WMC) in Wieringerwerf, in the north of the Netherlands, Peter Aubert, a member of the GONL Interministerial Energy Transition Group (IETG), stressed that identifying and developing renewable energy sources was a top priority of the Dutch government. By the year 2020, he said the GONL expected renewable energy, including wind power and biomass, to provide 20 percent of the country's electricity needs. Don van Delft, WMC General Manager, gave an overview of WMC applied research on materials and

components for wind turbine structures. He explained how new wind turbine blade designs were revolutionizing the industry. Today, a single wind turbine can produce 2.5 megawatts of power, which is enough electricity to power 2000 homes. This is five times more electricity per turbine than was possible just ten years ago. Vincent van den Brekel, CEO of Darwind, a local wind energy company, noted that the new designs allowed for quieter and bird-safe turbines -- two of the main objections raised by opponents to wind turbines. WMC, a joint venture between the Energy Research Center of the Netherlands (ECN) and the University of Delft, is the largest lab of its kind in the world and tests wind turbine blades of over 60 meters (200 feet) in length and turbine engines weighing up to 300 tons.

¶4. At a nearby ECN wind farm, Wim Stam, General Manager of the ECN Wind Turbine Test Site, demonstrated how prototypes of wind turbines from General Electric (GE) and Siemans were being tested under actual conditions. He explained that new materials and designs helped make the turbines larger and more efficient, including GE prototype blades that spun 100 meters across, covering a surface area larger than a 747 jumbo jet. While standing directly under an operating wind turbine with the delegation, Stam also noted that the turbine operated almost without any noise.

¶5. In separate briefings, Maurits Groen, also a member of the IETG, and Chris Westra, Director of the Dutch Wind Energy Association, outlined the GONL's plan to develop wind energy sources in the North Sea. They explained that the GONL planned to finance the building of an energy grid in the North Sea with private companies investing in the actual wind turbines. By investing in an energy grid, the GONL hoped to spur development in the sector and allow private companies to deliver electricity directly to consumers. Westra noted that

the Danish wind energy company Vesta had already begun building 60 wind turbines in the North Sea. To store the electricity produced, Groen said the Dutch were considering the construction of a large elevated lake in the North Sea that would be filled with water pumped into it by the energy produced by the wind turbines. During peak electricity demand periods, the water in the lake would be released to drive a hydroelectric dam.

¶6. At ECN Headquarters in Petten, Unit Managers Peter Alderliesten and Marije Lafleur briefed the delegation on recent developments in the areas of energy efficiency in the home and capturing heat waste in manufacturing. ECN is the Netherlands' largest research lab devoted to energy and was recently selected as the main energy research institution for the European Union. It plays a major role in shaping energy policy for the Netherlands and develops new technologies for renewable energy (wind, solar, biomass, fuel cell, and hydrogen) as well as coal, gas, and nuclear power. It operates along the same lines as the National Laboratories in the U.S. (Sandia National Laboratory and Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory). While the GONL provides 30 percent of ECN's budget, the Center also generates revenue from joint projects with industry and through its research and patents. In a separate visit to ING Bank Headquarters "The Shoe" in Amsterdam, the delegation saw first-hand how some Dutch firms are responding to the GONL call for all new buildings to be carbon neutral by 2012.

WATER MANAGEMENT: MANAGING THE UNAVOIDABLE

¶7. The delegation met in The Hague with officials from the Ministry of Transport, Public Works, and Water Management (MOT), including State Secretary for Water Management, Tineke Huizinga-Heringa, who addressed the importance of continuing U.S.-Dutch cooperation on water management issues. Huizinga-Heringa was accompanied by Mark Dierikx, Director-General for Water Affairs, Roel Gans, Director for

International and European Affairs, Hans Balfoort, Senior Advisor to the Director General for Water Affairs, and Annelie Kohl, Senior Advisor to the Director-General for the Rijkswaterstaat, which handles national public works and water management.

¶8. Balfoort provided a brief overview of Dutch flood history and the current national flood prevention policy, which focuses on probability and risk management. In the aftermath of hurricanes Katrina and Rita in the United States in 2005, he said the Dutch refocused their own efforts to deal more with the consequences of flooding, such as evacuations, emergency management, and reconstruction. He said this new strategy also included a shift away from "hard" defenses such as dikes to more natural defenses. Kohl explained the implementing role of the Dutch Rijkswaterstaat (RWS/the Netherlands Department of Public Works), noting similarities with the work done by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the U.S. Federal Highway Administration in the United States. She said a high-level of cooperation had already existed between the USACE and RWS prior to the 2005 Katrina and Rita disasters, including a 2004 Memorandum of Agreement between the two bodies. U.S.-Dutch cooperation and exchanges had continued to accelerate and improve since 2005. In fact, the RWS was now turning to the USACE and other agencies in the U.S. for advice on how the Netherlands could best manage the consequences of a major flood or other natural disaster, Kohl added.

¶9. A tour of the Maeslantkering, a giant movable storm surge barrier that sits near the mouth of the New Waterway leading from the North Sea to the heart of the Rotterdam Port, provided the delegation with an up-close view of the most recent addition to the Dutch Delta Works. The Delta Works includes various barriers in densely populated areas near the river mouths of the Rhine, the Meuse and the Schelde. Folkert Post, Director of the South-Holland Region of the RWS, explained how the Maeslantkering was built to avoid the need to raise the existing dikes around Rotterdam. Its unique design -- a movable barrier -- can be closed when water levels threaten dikes in the area without hindering shipping into the Rotterdam Port.

¶10. A visit further inland to the "Room for the Rivers" project in Werkendam showcased Dutch efforts to adapt to

climate change by managing the discharge of large volumes of water in the Rhine, the Waal, and the Meuse rivers. The Mayor of Werkendam Henk Hellegers joined the delegation for a tour of the project and a presentation on how the system is designed to mitigate damage and loss of life from flooding by providing overflow capacity to these river deltas.

¶11. During a dinner hosted by the Netherlands Water Partnership (NWP), the delegation heard about NWP efforts to coordinate and to promote Dutch water expertise in places such as Louisiana, Florida, California, and New York. The NWP is a a public-private consortium that includes the RWS, Dutch national water labs and research institutes, and various non-governmental organizations and private companies working in the area of water management. Jos Dijkman, a Flood Management Engineer from WL Delft Hydraulics, the largest national water lab in the country, also briefed the delegation on current computer modeling efforts in the area of flood management.
Arnall